

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONROV 07717 291217Z

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2440

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 7717

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LI

SUBJECT: MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT TOLBERT

REF: (A) STATE 262785; (B) MONROVIA 7395

1. AMBASSADOR DELIVERED SECRETARY KISSINGER'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT TOLBERT (REF A) AT A MEETING THAT INCLUDED FONMIN DENNIS AT THE EXECUTIVE MANSION OCTOBER 28. TOLBERT READ THE LETTER CAREFULLY AND, VISIBLY PLEASED, REMARKED THAT IT WAS A VERY GOOD LETTER AND THAT HE AGREED COMPLETELY WITH EVERYTHING. HE WENT ON TO SAY "SPEAKING FRANKLY", THAT U.S. HAS BEEN SLOW IN TAKING INITIATIVES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, LOSING OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE THEM AT THE PROPER TIME. HE SAID WHAT CONCERNS HIM IS THAT WHEN THE U.S. DOES TAKE STEPS IT DOES NOT GET FULL CREDIT FOR THEM. THE DELAY ON MOVING VORSTER ON NAMIBIA HAS RESULTED IN PUSHING NUJOMA TOWARD THE COMMUNISTS. NUJOMA HAS BEEN SHOPPING FOR ARMS, CUBAN AND RUSSIAN, AND HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL AND IT IS NOW GOING TO BE HARD TO GET THEM COMMUNISTS OUT. HE ADDED THAT IF VORSTER HAD MADE A STATEMENT SETTING UP A DEFINITE TIMETABLE FOR NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE NUJOMA WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT HAVE HAD TO GO TO THE COMMUNISTS. HE SAID HE URGED VORSTER TO DO SO WHEN HE WAS IN MONROVIA. VORSTER HAD SAID HE WAS ANXIOUS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM AND COULD ARRANGE A MEETING "RIGHT HERE IN HIS (TOLBERT'S) OFFICE," EVEN INCLUDING SWAPO. TOLBERT CONCLUDED HE WOULD COMMUNICATE THE SECRETARY'S LETTER IMMEDIATELY TO NUJOMA WITH WHOM HE SAID HE IS IN CONTACT THROUGH THE LIBERIAN EMBASSY IN NAIROBI. HE CHARACTERIZED NUJOMA AS STILL SUBJECT TO BEING INFLUENCED BY

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PAGE 02 MONROV 07717 291217Z

WHAT THE U.S. IS DOING.

2. CONVERSATION INCLUDED A DISCUSSION OF THE BRITISH, FRENCH, AND U.S. VETO OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON SOUTH AFRICA SANCTIONS AND AMBASSADOR PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT A COPY OF GOVERNOR SCRANTON'S REMARKS, EMPHASIZING THAT WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS ON NAMIBIA AND THAT WHILE WE MAY DIFFER ON MEANS, WE ARE ALL SEEKING THE SAME END. AMBASSADOR SAID NEVER BEFORE HAD THE AMERICAN PEOPLE BEEN SO INVOLVED IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES, THAT THE SECRETARY'S INITIATIVES ARE UNIQUE, AND WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN A BREAKTHROUGH, THAT WE CAN COME TO RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROBLEMS WITHOUT BLOODSHED.

3. TOLBERT, WHO ONLY THE PRECEDING EVENING AT A DINNER GIVEN IN HIS HONOR BY THE LIBERIAN CONGRESS HAD CRITICIZED THE THREE-POWER VETO, REPLIED HE HAD ALWAYS SAID THAT PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER SHOULD BE APPLAUDED FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE SAID THEY HAVE PRODUCED SMITH'S ACCEPTANCE OF MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA WITHIN TWO YEARS DESPITE EARLIER STATEMENTS THAT THIS WOULD NOT COME ABOUT IN HIS LIFE TIME. BUT HE SAID, REVERTING SPECIFICALLY TO THE SANCTIONS VETO, THE ISSUE OF NAMIBIA IS FOR AFRICA PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL. HE, AS A FRIEND OF THE U.S. AND ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS IT, IS CONFRONTED WITH THE SENTIMENTS OF THE OTHER SIDE. "IF WE ARE ABLE TO SUPPORT YOU," HE NOTED, "WE MUST MAINTAIN OUR CREDIBILITY. AS FOR THE VETO, YOU HAD TO DO IT BUT IT IS STILL DISHEARTENING. YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE THE SITUATION."

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